

First Grade

Elkus ranch program staff will meet your students at the fire circle to review a few rules before beginning your program. First Graders will be encouraged to observe carefully and ask questions as they visit the ranch. If you provide our staff with a copy of your KWL activity or let us know in advance if you have specific instructional goals or objectives for your visit, our staff will be happy to address them during the program. Large groups will be divided by classroom for the program but all groups will visit the same areas, in varying order.

Greenhouse: The greenhouse provides an opportunity for children to observe how plants are started, and learn about the conditions needed for them to grow and thrive. While transplanting a seedling to grow at home, students will locate and identify major structures and learn about their functions.



plant



Garden: In the garden first grade students will identify common fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers and learn how weather and seasons affects what grows in the garden. They will have an opportunity to see, smell, touch and sometimes taste a variety of plants and compare their needs in terms of sunlight and water. They will also look for evidence of animals that find food and shelter in the garden or act as pollinators and seed dispersers. Students will learn how we improve the soil through composting garden waste.



Animals: Elkus Ranch raises chickens, goats, and sheep. We also have rabbits, donkeys, horses, and a llama. During their visit children will have the opportunity to brush the goats and donkeys, visit the chickens, and feed the sheep. With each animal encounter, children will see the special adaptations that help each animal thrive in their natural environment and how their needs are met at the ranch.

Upper Barn: The upper barn houses our flock of sheep and it is here where we demonstrate the process of converting raw wool into clothing. The entire process of shearing, washing, carding, spinning, dyeing and weaving is illustrated. In the spring we may also have lambs and goat kids in the barn and we will discuss how we care for and protect them as they grow.



Lower Barn: This barn is full of wonderful artifacts to explore including bones and skulls, hides, taxidermy mounts, feathers, and nests from domestic and wild animals. Students will be introduced to the terms *predator* and *prey* and will learn how the basic needs of both wild and domestic animals are met.

Recycling and Stewardship: By the end of the tour children are ready for lunch. After learning how to save water and paper while washing their hands, the group heads to the picnic area for the last part of their tour. Here we will discuss their role in keeping our environment healthy by reducing the amount of trash that heads to our landfills by sorting the trash from their lunch into compost, recycle and trash bins. We will also provide models of reusable items that can be used for a waste free lunch. Our program concludes here and we encourage teachers to complete the last column of the KWL activity to help children verbalize what they have learned. Your students are welcome to write to us to share a special memory when they return to school. We are always happy to provide answers to follow up questions too.